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General Studies - 1

Topic: Urbanization – problems and remedies

1) Critically comment on Delhi government's odd-even vehicle rationing experiment. (200 Words)

What's this 'odd-even' rule?

This rule would define which car you can drive on a particular date. On even dates, only cars with license plates ending with an even number will be allowed on city roads, and on odd dates, cars with license plates ending with an odd number will be allowed.

How this Experiment will Help:-

- 1) Will reduce the number of Vehicles on road hence to some extent may reduce Pollution.
- 2) It may create awareness among People that how alarming Pollution condition has become.
- 3) Delhi's Model if successful will act as a benchmark for other states also.
- 4) Will Promote Public Transport and Non-Motorized ways of travelling which is the need of the hour.
- 5) Can come Handy in Effective traffic Control. (Handling Jams etc).
- 6) More Manpower is required to make this experiment successful thus it may lead to employment generation.

Why Not So Effective:-

- 1) A long list of exemptions is there which dilutes the motive behind this rule.
- 2) This rule is effecting only 5-6% of vehicles in Delhi so the changes will be insignificant.
- 3) Delhi Police does not have the kind of manpower required to implement this decision.
- 4) If the Delhi government successfully implements the odd-even formula, the question still arises as to how people will commute. Frequency of Public Transport is low.

5) People who are rich and in a condition to afford another car will prefer odd or even number. RTO, is bound to increase rates for granting favours with people paying bigger bribes.

There is no denying the fact that it is a very thought off initiative of the Delhi Govt. looking at the Pollution Levels (especially in delhi) but the blueprint with so many exceptions and not many alternatives of Transport are defeating the Purpose of it.

Additional points:-

-Enforcing car-free days, cycle lanes ,encouraging cab sharing, launching plantation drives

- public campaigns are a must before asking the people to accept something like an odd-even formula

-Polluting industries need to be made compliant or shut down

-thermal power plants need to be relocated away from population clusters

-alternatives need to be found for India's rising dependence on trucks for freight movement.

-The Bharat Stage-VI fuel norms should be put in place

-Recently ban on stub burning by HC of delhi is good step

Topic: World history

Who are the Kurds? Discuss their history, relations with countries in the Middle – East and reasons behind their fight against ISIS. (200 Words)

History: Kurdish are an ethnic group comprising mostly Sunni muslims residing majorly in Turkey, Iraq, Syria & Iran. They speak a different language & their culture resembles most closely to Iranian. They claim that Kurdish are descendants of Hurrians & Medes (Iranian), their language is a subgroup of Northwestern Iranian languages.

In the wake of World War I, they started demanding separate state which led to victorious allies make a provision in Treaty of Sevres. However, Turkish leadership under Kamal Pasha which led to a revolution & gradually agreed for Treaty of Lausanne contained no separate provision for Kurdish people. Since then, their war has ravaged.

Relation with countries:

- 1) Turkey comprises of 18% Kurd population, several organizations are formed by Kurds which have led to revolt of 1925, 1928, 1935 but they are always brutally subdued by Government.
- 2) Iraq has 17% Kurd population, during Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s, regime implemented anti-Kurdish policies and civil war broke out, this led to genocidal campaign where Kurds were brutally assaulted.
- 3) The government of Iran has never employed the same level of brutality against its own Kurds like Turkey or Iraq, but it has always been implacably opposed to any suggestion of Kurdish separatism.
- 4) Syria has 9% Kurd population, and the regime used to suppress the ethnic identity of Kurds by various bans on the use of the Kurdish language, refusal to register children with Kurdish names, etc.

One of the first respondents against ISIS has been Kurdish forces, whose interest were deeply affected when they started losing out on territories gained by them in the course of 100 years through brutal wars against respective authoritarian regimes. With the rise of Islamic State their fight for separate state was weakened, this enabled West to align with Kurdish forces who joined hands to fight for common cause.

When the War against ISIS will be won, not recognizing Kurdish as separate state will be extremely difficult for the western world, and the creation of Kurdish state seems imminent in the years to come.

Topic: Art and culture

“Allowing jallikattu to remain a sport because it represents Tamil tradition would legitimise cruelty against animals and have serious implications for the right to life.” Do you agree with this view? Is jallikattu more cruel than customs where animals are mass executed in the name of gods in thousands of villages in India? Critically comment. (200 Words)

Cultural sentiments and religious belief are very much intertwined in day to day life of people in India and has been in constant conflict with human and animal rights voices as evident from the Jallikattu case.

Allowing Jallikattu as a sports may well be a departure from our constitutional goal to protect animal against cruelty (Art 51(g)). It legitimizes the animal cruelty in the name of sports and put the life of people at risk who get killed and injured with an intention to derive pleasure from it. Moreover no sound arguments have been made

by its proponents to justify its legitimacy rather it seems politically motivated. Customs allowed this event to be practiced in festival of Pongal only but it is being organized for 5-6 months and vested interest of its organizers is clearly visible.

However declaring Jallikatu as sports will help in imposing strict regulation and ensuring animal are not subject to cruelty. The bonus in form of more tourism and better treatment of the animals can be justified if AWBI, GoI and SC guidelines are adhered to in true spirit.

Recently Gadhimai festival in Nepal where 5 lakh animals were slaughtered was banned by its trust in 2015 for future. Both mass execution and cruelty against animals through such sports are too be condemned, though our society has not evolved enough to accept these changes and see it as an infringement upon their traditions and customs. Upholding the constitutional spirit and SC verdict is the way forward till our society evolves itself to fully understand the value of animal and human rights.

Topic: Social empowerment; Role of women

It is said that increased representation in the three-tier panchayat structure has empowered women in rural areas. How do panchayats empower rural women and what is the result of this empowerment? Analyse. (200 Words)

The various ways in which Panchayats have contributed to empowering rural women can be seen as follows –

1. Political –

(i) Mandatory 33% reservation for women in Panchayats under Art 243D

(ii) Inclusion of SC/ST women in decision-making

2. Social –

(i) Since Women and child development falls under the 11th Schedule, women themselves are responsible for policy formulation

(ii) Charged them with the responsibility of bringing about economic and social justice under Art 243G

3. Economic –

(i) Formation of common platforms for SHGs

(ii) Planning of schemes related to common village resources like forests, watersheds etc.

The result of this empowerment can be seen under the following heads –

1. Political –

- (i) Enhanced women participation in Gram Sabha and voter turnout
- (ii) Percolation of democratic processes to the most marginalized sections

2. Social –

- (i) Increasing stature of women, thus giving an impetus to their confidence and breaking social-stratifications
- (ii) Lower instances of MMR, IMR due to enhanced awareness about schemes like JSY, JSSY etc.

3. Economic –

- (i) Common platform for women SHGS to share experiences and problems enhancing their productivity
- (ii) Improvement in conservation activities like watershed development, JFM etc. improving village resource productivity

Hence, although issues like use of women as proxies by husbands, low decision-making power due to poor education etc. remain, the contribution of Panchayats to empower women have been largely positive

Topic: Changes to geographical features (Paper – 3 Conservation)

According to scientists colonies of snowflake coral (*Carijoa riisei*), an invasive species recently documented off the coast of Thiruvananthapuram and Kanyakumari, could pose a serious threat to the marine ecology of the region. Examine why? Also discuss other threats to biodiversity along Indian coastal regions. (200 Words)

An Invasive Alien Species (IAS) is one which reproduces in large number in a region far away from it's native habitat. The offsprings then compete for resources and hurt natural ecology of the region by threatening survival of native species.

Snowflake coral is one such species that has colonised waters off the coasts of India. It is a native of tropical west atlantic and Caribbean. It is invasive because it crowds out other marine life like algae, coral, sponges. It is currently threatening marine ecology of A&N islands, Nicobar, Kucchh and Goa.

India is one of 12 mega-biodiversity countries and 25 biodiversity hotspots on earth. A significant part of this lives on it's ~**8000km coastline**. Some other threats to its coastal ecology include:

☐☐ **Trade and Transport introduced invasive species:** from ballast waters of ships which is the most important vector carrying invasive species.

☐☐ **Coastal Pollution:** Fertilizers, sugar, paper and pulp, mines and minerals and tanneries etc are major sources of coastal pollution that threatens coastal biodiversity.

☐☐ **Climate Change:** Sea level rise and increase in sea-surface temperatures hurts the natural habitat of native species.

☐☐ **Overexploitation:** leads to changes in species composition, shifts in dominance and survivability and therefore a loss of biodiversity.

Although the **Coastal Regulation Zone Notification of 2011** outlines these challenges in detail, implementation needs to be stepped up. (224w)

In addition, some points in threats might include,

- accidental death due to collision with ship ex. whale
- illegal trade and poaching of endangered species
- ocean acidification leads to coral bleaching
- due rise in oceanic temperature in Kerala region leads to change fishing ground -> movement of ecosystem more towards north pole means towards Gulf of Kutch->affect entire ecosystem+ create livelihood problem for fisherman
- oil spills from ship->resist sunlight for marine ecosystem+ create pollution on beach area->affect tourism.

Topic: Social empowerment; Capitalism

1) What do you understand by Dalit capitalism? It is found that Dalit entrepreneurs face immense hurdles to progress. What are these hurdles and how can government help them overcome these hurdles? Critically discuss. (200 Words)

Who is a Dalit:-

The word Dalit mean “oppressed” or “broken”— refer to people who were once known as “untouchables”.

What is Dalit Capitalism:

It refers to Dalits Carrying out their own businesses and welcoming the Economic reforms and Globalization with open arms,

and getting themselves along with the Capitalist Class and Market Forces. When they themselves become one of the Market Force i.e a Business Entrepreneur/a Capitalist.

Problems Faced by Dalit Entrepreneurs:

Social Problems:-

- 1)Lack of access to existing business networks, Since most business Houses are from members of one specific Community,
- 2)Discrimination still persists in India. Caste Stigma is a major Hurdle.

Economic Problems:

- 1)Credit Facilities from Formal Sources is not easily available,due to collateral issues. This leads to serious Finance Crisis.
- 2)Due to economic weakness , they lack basic education and technological knowledge.

Political and Administrative Problems:

- 1)They face many difficulties in getting clearances Ex. Land at a market location,both due to Political unwillingness and Administrative lacunae.
- 2)Politics in India is highly influenced by Business Houses , Who do not prefer emergence of Dalits to compete in business.

How Can Govt. Address these Issues:

- 1)Providing Skills , Education, Training to Dalits will enable them to think about being an entrepreneur. NSDC can help in this regard.
- 2) Provision of Cheap Credits and Collateral Free Loan.
- 3)Priority Sector Lending by Banks can include special Funds for Dalits.
- 4)Promoting Cooperatives among Dalits.
- 5)Political Will and Administrative empathy towards Dalit can act as a moral support to them.
- 6)Govt. can Rope in well established Private Firms for Dalit upliftment ,who can act as Angel Investors and Provide managerial skills.
- 7)Venture Capital Funds

Only when Dalits are able to directly participate in the Economic activities, they will be able to integrate with the society better and break the Caste stigma attached. We all must assist in their endeavour to break the shackles of traditional Hopelessness

Topic: World geography

2) Discuss the impact of La Nina and El Nino on agricultural markets. (200 Words)

WHAT IS EL NINO: Unusual warm water appears in Eastern Pacific Ocean off Peruvian Coast.

Drought situation in Australia, Southeast Asia and Africa. Floods in Brazil and USA Midwest.

WHAT IS LA NINA: Unusual cold water appears in Eastern Pacific Ocean off Peruvian Coast.

EFFECTS ON AGRICULTURE MARKET

EL NINO:

1) America Continent

- a) Lower corn yields, harvest of summer crops delayed due to increased rainfall
- b) Frequent rains reduce tilling and yield of winter wheat
- c) Yield of winter vegetables such as tomato, bell pepper, sweet corn are lower
- d) Fungal and bacterial diseases pose higher risks

2) Drought conditions in South Asia

- a) Reduce coconut and palm yields, higher and more volatile prices for these products
- b) production of bananas and plantains for local consumption could be adversely affected by prolonged drought
- c) Commodities prices rise especially sugar, pulses and edible oil.
- d) livestock and the fisheries are affected severely by the drought.

LA NINA:

1) American Continent

- a) Cold water from Peruvian coast brings nutrients (up-welling) leads to improved fishing
- b) Wheat Yields and corn yields are higher
- c) Less Fungal and Bacterial diseases

- d) Pasture crops yield is lowered
- 2) Intensified Monsoon in South Asian region, increases overall crop production

Topic: Art and culture

3) How distinct was Vijayanagar architecture compared to its predecessors'? Discuss with examples. (200 Words)

Vijayanagara empire(14th-16th century) with its capital at Vijayanagara had rich heritage of art & culture based

in South India in Deccan plateau region.Hampi(present Vijayanagara) has been listed in UNESCO world heritage site. There are distinct features of Vijanagara architecture from previous style with new modifications.

1) Soapstone used by Chalukya, Hoysala Empire for temple construction replaced by local hard Granite in Badami Chalukya style

during Vijayanagara empire.eg.Vijayshankara temple.

2) Plaster being used for giving smoothness

3) Finely polished stone pillars & large temples with brick, wood built in Chola style

4) Carving of large monoliths such as Ganesha at Hampi.

5) Presence of many secular structures bearing Islamic features in great city as many Muslims are employed in courts/army by Vijayanagara empire.

6) Distinct feature about palaces are they built on raised platform of granite with water tank inside it from previous south rulers.ex.Lotus Mahal Palace

7) Shrines with image depicting saints worshippers in temples, which was not seen in previous shrines though architecture was similar to Chalukya style.

8) Symmetrical shape of large palaces which normally faces east/north direction

So Vijanagara architecture was unique as it was not influenced by only style of precedors, but it was combination of Chalukya,Hoysala,Chola,Islamic architecture.

Topic: Factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries in various parts of the world (including India)

1) Examine the factors responsible for the concentration of plantation sector in South India. Do you think this sector is discriminated against agriculture sector? Critically examine. (200 Words)

What does the Plantation Sector Includes:-

The major plantation crops include coconut, arecanut, oil palm, cashew, tea, coffee and rubber; the minor plantation crops include cocoa.

South India Constitutes nearly 60% of India's Plantation Sector.

Reasons

1) Climatic Conditions:- Most of the Plantation Crops require near about temp. in 20-30 degrees and Rainfall from 150-250 mm, in this sense South India provides the best conditions for growth.

2) Topography:- Water Stagnation is very harmful for Plantation Crops, hence Hilly/slopy areas have better prospects, in this regard south India acts as heaven due to presence of Western Ghats, Eastern Ghats etc..

3) Local Winds:- Southern States are generally not affected by the Local Winds (loo), which are detrimental for Plantation Crops.

4) Transport Since the main motive behind Plantation Cropping is 'Commercial', hence availability of Transport facilities for export play an Important Role.

5) Labour availability Coffee, Tea etc requires a large number of Labour since they are hand picked,

6) Miscellaneous Reasons: Presence of Cooperatives, Capital, presence of Marketing Boards, availability of Ports etc are aiding in plantation Sector.

Why Plantation Sector is Feeling being Discriminated

1) Plantation Labour Act, 1951 has not been changed or amended, many government schemes which are available to take care of the facilities provided under the PLA should be extended to the plantations. (which have not been done till now).

2) Commodity Prices Fluctuations (recently very low), Govt. is lagging in helping the Plantation sector, Whereas if we see the agriculture sector various methods are implemented (ex. MSP)

3) Taxation in Plantation Sector where as we see waiving schemes in Agricultural sector.

Plantation Sector is a very influential 43000 crore Industry, Govt. must ensure its facilitator role so that this sector to can flourish.

Govt. Can start by solving the above mentioned issues.

Topic: Urbanization – problems and remedies

1) Critically examine how will 'local self-governance' play its role in the implementation of Smart City project in Indian cities. (200 Words)

Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) play a key supportive role in the development of smart cities. Smart leadership and vision at this level and ability to act decisively will be important factors in determining the success of the mission.

The advantages of their participation:

- 1) Clear vision and eagerness for improvement their locality- helps effective and efficient development
- 2) Beneficial knowledge on the local environment and specific demands that need to be addressed.
- 3) Better oversight
- 4) Easy access to the local people to convince them in case of any conflicts over developments.
- 5) Act as workforce

However, there are certain issues which keep them away from complete participation such as financial power and mandate provided to Special Purpose Vehicle which is associated with private investors, which may dominate and threatens the decentralized and democratic nature. And also lack of financial powers and administrative powers and lack of skills to upgrade with the required changes. Measures to be taken in order to eliminate these, they are:

- 1) Administrative solutions: States have specifically transferred the administrative functions to ULBs. This needs to be revised based on the current situation and clear mechanisms to be developed to protect their democratic nature of governance
- 2) Financial devolution: Formula based transfers and grants-in-aid from divisible pool to ULBs. They should be allowed to levy taxes. Reform of property tax could also be a solution.
- 3) Capacity and skill building activities specific to the city and related project.

Carrying out reforms to strengthen their finances and to increase their confidence would help local governments in improving their credit-worthiness.

Topic: Post – independence consolidation

1) “On January 10, 1966, the Tashkent Declaration brought an inconclusive war to an inconclusive end.” Elaborate and also examine what would have happened had India not signed Tashkent Declaration. (200 Words)

The Tashkent Agreement(TA) was signed at the end of Indo-Pak War(1965). The War has been termed inconclusive due to the following reasons –

1. Pakistan’s attempt to infiltrate Kashmir in Operation Gibraltar couldn’t be thwarted quickly by Indian Army which caused the spreading of the theatre of war
2. The Pakistani army’s Operation Grand Slam caused massive losses to Indian army but their attack was blunted by Indian airforce
3. Both countries lost numerous tanks in the Battle of Chawinda
4. Neither side was able to achieve air superiority

The end of the War was inconclusive as –

1. Pakistan failed to achieve its objective of fomenting rebellion in Kashmir
2. The ceasefire line was not designated as the international border
3. USSR’s support for Pakistan, aimed at diminishing Pak-China alliance, was not successful
4. No territorial gains could be made by either side

If India wouldn’t have signed the Tashkent agreement –

1. Positives –

(i) India’s would have gained territory in the fertile regions of Lahore and Sialkot while Pakistan held territory in arid regions in Sindh and Chumb

(ii) The risk of losing Lahore would have remained a pressure point against Pakistan for perpetuity

2. Negatives –

(i) Prolonged hostilities could have worsened the famine in India

(ii) Rejecting USSR’s offer may have caused the UN to enter the fray

Topic: World geography; Critical changes to geographical features

2) “According to a group of scientists, there is now compelling evidence to show that humanity’s impact on the Earth’s atmosphere, oceans and wildlife has pushed the world into a new geological epoch – ‘Anthropocene’.” What are these geological epochs? Why do scientists think that we have moved into new epoch? Examine. (200 Words)

Geological Epochs are phases that the Earth's ecosystem evolves over the course of its lifetime. Each epoch has a distinct environmental system which is a development over the previous epoch. The current epoch called the Holocene epoch started about 12,000 years ago. It is believed by many scientists that we have entered into a new epoch called 'Anthropocene' due to the following reasons:

- The presence of isotopes from all the nuclear tests carried post-world war II.
- The content of carbon in atmosphere is about 400 parts per million, a massive growth of 120 parts per million since the start of industrialization.
- About half the concrete used so far in the history of the planet has been used in the past two decades.
- The enormous amount of plastic in the oceanic waters damages the oceanic ecosystem and its life.
- The heavy usage of fertilizers has increased the content of nitrogen and phosphorous in the soil and has made it saline.
- In about a few centuries, about 75% of the species of the Earth will become extinct.

While the transition to the new epoch is yet to be certified by the International Commission on Stratigraphy, this discussion can help us realize the amount of damage caused to the planet due to human activities.

Topic: Art and culture

1) Write an account on the contribution of famous Kashmiris to India’s art and culture and examine significance of some of their works. (200 Words)

Kashmir rightly known as the "Crown of India" has been very significant in the enrichment of Indian art and culture.

Some of the Famous Kashmiris and their Contribution:

1. Abhinav Gupta :- A Kashmiri Shaiva Philosopher, who contributed in the field of Music, Philosophy, dramaturgy, cognitive sciences, Tantra, yoga etc.

Notable Contribution and Significance: Some of his most notable works include:

Tantraloka: "To throw Light on Tantra", a synthesis of all the Trika system.

Paratrisikavivarana: Detailing the signification of the phonematic energies and their two sequential ordering systems, Matrka and Malini

2. Kalhana Kashmiri author who has contributed vastly in the development of Sanskrit language and Indian literature.

Most Notable Work :- Rajatarangini (an account of the history of Kashmir)

3. Charaka Contributed in the earliest of the Medical traditions.

Charak Samhita book was written by him, vastly taken as base for Indian Medicine even today.

4. Habba Khatun Poetess and ascetic, who is also known as 'Nightingale of Kashmir',

Contribution: Habba Khatun introduced lol to Kashmiri poetry, lol is more or less equivalent to the English 'lyric'.

5. Contribution in Painting/Handcrafts/Wood Carvings Kashmir has contributed in the painting forms such as the Pahari school of Painting, Shawls from Kashmir are a true example of Art form.

6. Some Contemporary Contributors:

Malika Pukhraj-singer, Deen Bandhu Sharma-writer, Ghulam Rasool Santosh-painter.

Topic: Location factors; Population; Urbanization

2) Bengaluru has more people with an engineering degree than New Delhi (all three corporations) and Greater Mumbai combined. In your opinion, which factors have enabled Bengaluru to gain this position and what has been its impact on Indian economy? Discuss. (200 Words)

Bengaluru being Silicon Valley of India has attracted more engineers than Delhi and Mumbai combined due to following factors:

1. Bengaluru is a diverse outsourcing hotspot: the Silicon Valley of India has moved from delivering volume based work to IT, ITES, KPO and other technology related services; and has become best outsourcing hotspot of India.

2. Research based platform: It is the 'science centre' of India with over 100 R&D centres.
3. Government: Karnataka government has taken various measures like reducing tax rates, easy compliance standards, robust connectivity services, simple exit norms etc. which have improved ease of doing business, especially in Bengaluru, giving boost to business culture.
4. Climate: due to proximity of sea, Bengaluru has soothing climate throughout the year.
5. Education: Bengaluru was always a great education hub. Government has even expanded its' colleges reach worldwide through exchange programmes.
6. Culture: Bengaluru was a highly cosmopolitan area even before it became the IT capital of the country. Even in the 70's and 80's, there was huge linguistic diversity, people could not only communicate in South Indian languages but also well versed in Hindi and English too.
7. Nature of people: by nature, people are welcoming and relatively easy going. They are not aggressive and welcome new comers and new ideas easily.
8. Close proximity to other metros like Chennai, Hyderabad, Mumbai.

Impact on Indian economy:

1. Boosted business and corporate culture.
2. Increased FDI into the country by three folds.
3. Helped in reducing unemployment.
4. Revolutionised service sector in India through outsourcing, call centres, entrepreneurship etc.

Hence due to these factors – the number of persons either graduating or migrating has disproportionately increased.

Topic: India and its neighborhood- relations

3) Recently Sri Lanka took the first step towards drafting a new Constitution by tabling a motion in its Parliament to create a Constitutional Assembly. Critically examine the challenges the Constituent Assembly faces and the issues that Sri Lanka must consider to create an inclusive and secular constitution. (200 Words)

Sri Lanka's government started drawing up a new constitution aimed at fostering a multi-ethnic + plural polity and maintaining democratic stability. In background of civil war, constitutional assembly faces following challenges :

- 1) majoritarianism of the Sinhalese and estrangement of Tamils
- 2) Religious indifference to muslims
- 3) Post civil war Tamilians were rehabilitated into refugee camps with poor living conditions.
- 4) Legislature's inability to implement 13th amendment of existing constitution + management of the divergent interests of the coalition government.

Main elements of new constitution-

- 1) Promoting ethnic and religious integration in country by addressing ethnic and religious polarisation : Tamils are projected as the 'ethnic other' + Muslims as the 'religious other'.
- 2) Strengthening democratic institutions : abolishing the executive presidency + make the President responsible to the Parliament + reforming the electoral system.
- 3) Devolution of power to Provincial Councils to perform basic municipal functions + limiting excessive power of centre.
- 4) Comprehensive rights framework that guarantee fundamental rights and freedoms that assure human dignity.

Constitution making in the background of racial conflicts remains a formidable challenge, but considering minorities have contributed significantly to in new election it is possible to come up with an inclusive and secular constitution.

Topic: Art and culture

1) "Cinema had become an integral part of the nation's cultural identity." Do you agree? If yes, what is the nature and influence of this cultural identity? Critically analyse. (200 Words)

Cinema has become necessary in daily activities. It is a better medium to reflect the nature of the society and has also played a role in changing the lifestyle of the people.

It is true that it has been playing a prominent role in portraying nation's cultural identity.

1) The theme of the movie has been changing reflecting the prevailing culture of the society. For example, Stories of freedom

struggle and nature of Indian labour abroad in 50s and 60s, Agrarian lifestyle and issues in 70s, unemployment, dowry, population issues and also the role of family in 80s. Westernisation in 90s. Modern Science, Role of women in society have also been captured in the 20th century movies.

2) They are certain movies which also played a role in mentioning the importance of unity and patriotism such as Bombay (1995).

However, Cinema being a powerful medium to reach the masses, it has not yet utilized the platform and few movies reflect the false identity of Indian culture.

1) Stereotypes on role of women and caste groups in society

2) Depiction of erroneous science

3) Excessive violence, criminal stories and pornography

4) Over emphasis on love and showing a sense of dissatisfaction on life upon failures.

Thus, Film makers need to understand their powerful role and create realistic stories and themes to have a positive impact on the society and depict the culture only in a right manner. It is high time to understand that 'A Good Film is higher than any Education and a Bad film is more than a Poison'

Topic: Population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues

1) "Cultural norms and conspicuous consumption may be partly responsible for India's malnutrition problem." Analyse. (200 Words)

India is one of the highest ranking countries in the world for the number of children suffering from malnutrition per World Bank. Malnutrition in India results from various factors such as poor socio economic status, gender Inequality, differences in

region, religion and caste. In the context of it, cultural beliefs may enforce dietary preferences. This could be observed by below facts:

- 1) Hindus belonging to certain communities and Jains strictly follow vegetarian diet and hence may result in poor protein diet due to lack of awareness on alternative source of protein and also religious fasting.
- 2) Economic-cultural effect : Early marriages of poor girls based on conventional norms
- 3) Migrants (Especially North to south and vice versa) seemed to be uncomfortable in changing their diet preferences followed in regional food. They often end up in consuming less nutritious food.
- 4) On the contrary, changing form cultural norms also result in malnourishment. Westernization of diet, consuming foods which are unsuitable for tropical countries are consumed by middle and upper class strata of society also leads to malnourishment (changing food habits and over nutrition). Assimilation and absorption of nutrients also poor in this diet.
- 5) People mostly from elite group of society often spend lavishly on non-required items. Expensive parties, social gatherings, luxurious lifestyle many times neglect the importance of nutritious food.

Overall, to kill malnutrition, apart from government schemes and policies, individuals and society too have to give priorities to nutritional values and need to include alternative source of nutrients in diet in case of stricter cultural norms. Proper awareness campaigns by government, NGOs, health practitioners can play a major role.

Topic: Role of women; Social empowerment

1) “India stands out in the world because of shockingly low rates of recognised work participation by women (around 24 per cent) that have even declined over the past decade.” Critically examine the causes for this low rate. What measures should government take to increase work participation by women in both private and public organizations? Discuss. (200 Words)

It is rightly said that true development of any nation can not be achieved , till all the sections of the society get equal say and contribute equally in its making. Women Constitute around 50% of India's Population but their contribution in the Public and Private sphere is not on par with the Male Population.

Reasons why there is less Women Participation in Recognized Work Sectors:

1. Patriarchal Mindset In India, still a Son is preferred over a daughter, this leads to many impediments in the growth of Female child. Illiteracy among women is a direct result of this.

2. Stereotypes: Many Stereotypes are attached with girls, For Ex. it is a stereotype attached with girls that women's cant do mechanized work/ Highly skilled work. This is unfortunate but a true situation that exists and causes obstruction in Women's being involved in such Activities.

3. Biological Reasons: Women's undergo Pregnancy and other biological phases which male do not undergo, this causes many women to take a break from the Job. Physical strength also acts a Hindrance.

4. Household work not recognized: Most of the Women's in rural areas are involved in the agriculture related activities in their own farm, similarly a large chunk of women's population is involved in the Household Work ,which are not recognized.

5. Poor Post Natal Infrastructure Facilities: Women after giving birth to child, have to stay at home and take care of their children due to poor availability of Day Care Facilities in many areas.

6. Machine Age : Most of the Work in this era of Globalization is becoming Mechanized and Technology driven , which reduces the need of Labour. Hence low rate of recruitment which inturn results in less recruitment of women.

Safety and Security Issues: Due to poor security arrangements and safety provisions , women tend to leave many Job's, Night Shift Jobs are not undertaken, this also narrows the base of their participation.

How Can Govt. Help in Improving Women's Participation:

1) Adequate Maternity Protection Maternity leaves should be increased. Recently Govt. has increased the Period of Maternity for both Public and Private firms but it is still somewhat Limited.

2. Provision of Post Natal Infrastructure Govt. should establish more Day care Centres so that working women do not leave their Job so as to take care of their Child.

3. Promotion of SHG's to Hinterlands SHG's are a very efficient method of improving Women's participation, Govt. has done a good job till now, but still many parts have not been adequately benefiting from these.

4. Special Focus on Women in the Startup-Policies Govt. should give preference to the Women Entrepreneurs in the new startup policy.

5. Awareness Programs/Promotion Schemes People should be made aware of this social menace of differentiation between a male and female child. Various schemes of

Govt. are laudable in this respect. like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Ladli Laxmi Yojana etc.

6. Promotion of Handloom/Textile Sector Handloom and Textile industries (with special focus on Women's Participation) can attract and absorb Women Section and thus can help in improvement in their status.

7. Provision of Safety Provisions/ Flexibility in Shifts: Proper Safety provisions, like Cameras, 24*7 Monitoring inside the office, Van Facility should be provided to women's, Flexibility in shifts for Women employees will be a laudable step.

Topic: Communalism

1) Why do you think communalism persists in India? How can government stop its spread? Critically discuss. (200 Words)

Communalism is still persist in India due to following reasons:

1. Constitution: minorities community rights under Article 28,29 and 30 are being used, above the individual rights (Shah Bano case), absence of Uniform civil code still perception that all communities have divergent and contradictory interests
2. Religious: fundamentalists approach, 'Our belief alone is true' and 'rest is untrue or incomplete. not have tolerance
3. Political: vote bank, the policy of appeasement flaring up religious sentiments at the time of elections
4. Socio-economic: Population, Poverty, illiteracy and unemployment
5. International: External elements (including non-state actors)

Govt's role to stop

1. Economic integration of minority community. Various REccomendations of SACHAR COMMITTEE, NANA VATI COMMITTEE and RANGANATH MISHRA COMMISSION.
2. Legal Reform: IPC, CrPC, Strict law to deal with communal elements. Clear policy for relief and rehab
3. Access to Justice and Reparations Bill, 2011 ensuring accountability of the district administration
4. Police Reform: no interference in police by politicians

5. Policy Measures: eradicating the problem of unemployment among the youths, illiteracy and poverty, quality education. Although latest trend show that more affluent people are getting attracted towards communalism through social media. Security agency can deploy tools and technology to monitor such incidents.
6. Spreading harmony, unity, cultural exchange @ school, college level.

Topic: Resources; Indian geography; Location factors

1) What do you understand by rare earth materials? Critically discuss importance of these materials for India and India's position in rare earth materials industry at global level. (200 Words)

Rare Earth Metals (REM) are the series of 17 elements in IUPAC table. They possess immense applications due to their unique magnetic, luminescent and electro-chemical properties. They have wide applications in many modern technologies such as consumer electronics, computer, networks, advance transportation, defence and many others.

Importance of REM for India:

- 1) Making of energy efficient products such as CFL, LED, hybrid cars and fuel cells- helps to achieve Paris agreements (INDCs) and Smart Cities Mission
- 2) Immensely used as intermediates in military weapons and strategic devices production – in line with 'Make in India' initiative of DDC-2016
- 3) Promotes various initiatives such as Digital India, National Solar Mission through its wide applications in various sectors
- 4) Increase global demand could help in greater exports.

However, we lag in certain aspects to attain the benefits of these applications. They are:

- 1) No National strategy put in place to connect the capabilities and needs
- 2) No knowledge sharing/creation/participation other than public sector (DAE)
- 3) No joint research between DAE, DRDO and CSIR
- 4) No manufacturing and value addition facility to separate the metals to make products.
- 5) No linking between R&D institutes and connected industries.

Currently, we are in 4th position globally after China, US and Australia. Unless these gaps are not filled, we may not retain this position and merely maintain the status of low cost supplier of REM global market. Though India and China started together in mining REM, China went ahead and created a strong domestic ecosystem and reached top position. It is high time for us to analyse the gaps and bridge the bottlenecks and create a strong hold in REM global market.

Topic:Urbanization – problems and remedies

1) How is air pollution measured in India? What are the major sources of air pollution in Indian cities? In the light of recent Odd – Even road rationing experiment in Delhi, examine what long term solutions are needed to improve air quality. (200 Words)

Air pollution is measured on Air Quality Index(AQI) and concentration of PM2.5 and PM10 parameters.

AQI consider six pollutants (PM10, PM2.5, NO2, SO2, CO, O3,) through AQI measurement units installed in busy traffic area buildings by State's Pollution Control Board.

Major sources of Air pollution:

- Industrial pollution, thermal power plant.
- Outdoor burning of wastes, Post-harvest burning in agricultural area.
- Usage of unmaintained diesel generator in area facing power shortage.
- Unmaintained commercial and heavy vehicles, 2-4 wheelers pollutions
- Construction sites, dust in roads, mining, stone blasting, factories.

Long term solutions to improve air quality

- Strict check on commercial vehicles entering cities empty, we need to only penalise empty commercial vehicle cities. Only filled vehicle to enter and exit with filled load.
- Regular maintenance norms for commercial and passenger vehicles.
- High registration charges on second vehicle purchase.
- Retiring old vehicles based on their fuel usage.
- Encouraging the flexi-fuel cars, bio-fuels, CNG, BS-VI norms engine.
- Making public transport safe, timely, spacious and with last mile connectivity.

--Better management of traffic, as slow traffic leads to high pollutions and fuel wastage.

--Checking the surroundings of cities too for pollution, strict guidelines for construction sites for safety measures and dust disposing.

Also see:

<http://a.disqucdn.com/uploads/mediaembed/images/3078/1096/original.jpg>

Topic: Factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries

1) Discuss the location factors, problems and prospects of aluminium industry in India. (200 Words)

There are two stages in the process of aluminum production which determine the location of aluminum industry, besides labor availability and connectivity.

1. Conversion of Bauxite to alumina (involves 50% weight loss) : Hence, this is done in proximity to raw material (Bauxite ore) to avoid transportation cost.

In India Bauxite ores are located at Korba in Chhattisgarh, Jharsuguda and Niyamgiri hills in Odisha.

2. Conversion of alumina to aluminum is done in aluminum smelting plants, that involve the process of "electrolysis". Since a considerable amount of electricity is required, smelting plants are located near power plants.

In India, Smelting plants are located in Renukoot, UP and Hirakud in Odisha, because of proximity of bauxite ores and cheap electricity available from Rihand dam and Hirakud Dam.

Problems faced :

1)Currently, there is a slump in global aluminum prices, because of a supply glut created by over-production in China.

2)The domestic industry is likely to get hurt because of dumping of aluminum by China. Imports account for 56% of aluminum consumption in India.

3) Domestic issues : Production in India is facing obstacles such as resistance by the Dongria kondh tribes in Niyamgiri hills and environment clearances.

Prospects:

1)Rich reserves of coal and bauxite, the essential inputs in aluminum industry

2) Has potential to develop states like Odisha and Andhra, providing employment opportunities to local tribal population.

3) Aluminum is a green metal and hence production is concordant with Government's increasing shift towards sustainable development and Make in India campaign.

To exploit the potential, existing projects should be cleared, however, interests of tribal communities such as the Dongria Kondh have to be taken into account. Also, import duty should be hiked in order to protect the domestic industry from cheap imports.

Topic: Factors responsible for the location of primary, secondary, and tertiary sector industries; Resources

1) It is said that Africa is likely to be a significant source of meeting India's hydrocarbon needs in the years to come. Examine why and also discuss which regions of Africa are emerging as oil exporters and the geological reasons behind this trend. (200 Words)

Indo-African relations are on ever flourishing path with the cogency of mutual interests. It can be observed with the growing ties under umbrella setups like Indo-Africa summit, Indo-Africa Hydrocarbon Conference etc. Moreover, in the near future, Africa is likely to be a significant source for India's hydrocarbon hunger reliever, because:

1) With a gradual up steps in technological advancements, Africa started not only better utilizing her bountiful natural resources and minerals, but also exporting to other countries.

2) 4 countries of Africa - Algeria, Angola, Libya and Nigeria are the Members of OPEC group with good amount of oil production and comparatively stable than volatile West Asia.

3) At present, India depends 80% on energy needs. And in near future, it would grow by 90%. This demand would be met by African countries with growing economic and commercial ties.

4) Indian oil companies like ONGC Videsh Ltd has huge stakes in African countries for oil exploration, refineries, training personnel, infrastructure building etc. Further, many countries like China are investing heavily in infrastructure development and oil exploration in Africa. This would increase oil production in Africa exponentially and contributes for India's energy needs.

5) India's natural gas imports from Africa are almost doubled in a span of few years. Further increase is very much crucial for India's fertiliser industry and to meet INDCs targets as natural gas is a cleaner fuel. Moreover, Africa is one the largest export destination for refined petroleum and petroleum products.

Geological significance of Africa:

In the early geological timescale, Africa has been dissected from Gondwana land and drifted away. In this action, the African continent has been subjected to huge volcanicity and rupturing of crust due to tectonic activity. During Jurassic and Triassic era, African continent has faced crust trembling quakes and the then exiting huge and enormous carboniferous forests and forest life has been buried deeply under the crust. Thus the parts of N.W Africa, N.E and Eastern Africa, South Africa and Mozambique channel, and in and around the rift valley region have enormous quantities of minerals and hydro carbons.

Countries like Nigeria, Algeria, Egypt, Libya, South Africa, Mozambique and West Saharan countries have huge proved reserves of minerals and hydrocarbons.

However, due to civil unrest and political chaos in the region their potential has unmet. Moreover, these regions are highly prone to extremism, piracy and anti-government movements. Supporting Africa in its political and economic stability with little interference of the outside world would be beneficial for the Continent as well the world for sustaining global peace.

Topic: Salient features of Indian society

1) A national survey showed that less than half of the toilets built in the Swachh Bharat mission are being used for defecation, but doing duty instead as small granaries or as store rooms. Critically discuss why Swachh Bharat mission has failed, the reasons why people do not use toilets and practical measures needed to stop open defecation in India. (200 Words)

The nation wide famous Swachh Bharath Mission which envisaged to build 110 million toilets across India to end the practice of open defecation by 2019, though achieved good track record on building no. of toilets in many localities, yet failed to achieve the desired objective of eradicating open defecation in fast pace.

Reasons:

1) Long accustomed habits require more time to change and adopt new habits, particularly in rural areas.

- 2) Some feel that closed septic tanks cause pollution and not good for health and tend to spread rumours. More so, they feel that operational costs like emptying would be non-remunerative.
- 3) Some are of the opinion that closed toilets are meant for infirm and women.
- 4) Usually, rural people have less disposable income and feel that construction of toilet at house is an unnecessary expenditure.
- 5) Majority of the toilets built under the mission are seriously lacking proper maintenance and water constraints.

How to curb this menace?

- 1) Conducting intensive awareness programmes, especially in rural areas, educating about benefits of toilets and health risks of open defecation in the long run by citing reasons of diarrhea outbreaks, water pollution, spread of communicable diseases etc.
- 2) Encouraging NGOs, civil society and media to work in rural areas and slums for construction of toilets and proper maintenance.
- 3) Engaging local youth, educated and teachers etc., to motivate elders and other to devoid open defecation.
- 4) Subsidising and incentivising construction of toilets.
- 5) Making toilet mandatory for approvals of water connection, electricity, LPG connection, construction of new houses, work places, complexes etc., and conducting checks by municipal workers and imposing fines for improper maintenance, at least for some days to compel people to habituate usage of toilets.
- 6) Making toilet mandatory for contesting in Panchayat elections and keeping targets on local leaders and government authorities to curb this menace and mandatory reports in a periodical manner.

It is our national challenge to fight against open defecation completely eradicate it by the 150th anniversary of the Father of our Nation - Mahatma Gandhi. So, we must undertake this mission on a war footing.

Topic: Social empowerment; Role of women

2) The Bihar government's move to reserve 35 per cent of all jobs in the state sector for women is an attempt to increase their presence in the workforce. Do you think reservation in jobs alone will empower women? What else should government do in this regard? Discuss. (200 Words)

Women account for almost half of the country's population. But, still their participation in total workforce stands only at 24% ,according to the 2015 report of McKinsey.

35% reservation measure would resolve following problems :

- 1- Inadequate creation of jobs will no longer be a major barrier in finding jobs.
- 2- Competition from men will relatively ease down as women are often less prioritised over men with same skills due to physical reasons.

However, move does not address the root problems which are :

- 1- Gender gap right from primary to higher education.
- 2- Insecurity at work place & women unfriendly work culture.
- 3- Patriarchal attitude within society is still prevalent like social restriction on mobility.

Some other measures that government can adopt :

- 1- Effective enforcement & monitoring of recent measures with regard maternity leave & creche facilities.
- 2- Adopting women friendly policies- offering a light workload, flexible or reduced working hours, work from home facility during urgency times etc.

Typically, benefits of economic empowerment will not be realized fully until there is adequate social empowerment of women. For social empowerment, government can do little. Government should try to provide enable conditions. It is ultimately the society which needs shift in its attitude towards women. At the critical juncture of Demographic Profile, India can add 4% to its GDP by doubling the women participation in workforce.

Topic: Locational factors of Industries

1) In recent months it is reported in media that India might cease to be the 'pharmacy of the world'. Examine why and suggest what government can do to help India retain this status. (200 Words)

Indian pharma industry is reputed for increasing accessibility of life saving drugs at affordable prices throughout the world, especially for the developing and least developed countries. However, over the last few years, this trend has been taking shape distortions due to the following reasons:

- 1) Competition from foreign generic drug makes like China.
- 2) Suffering non-trade barriers by developed countries like USA, EU etc.
- 3) Accused of patent violations under international law. It is mainly because of serious lobbying of big MNCs in the developed countries by veiling their profiteering motives behind.
- 4) Stern warnings by the US Drug Administration Agencies to blacklist Indian pharmacy for liberal patent laws. It has some how mended India's stand for various reasons.
- 5) Poor manufacturing and drug clearance standards of some Indian companies causes dis-reputation to Indian drugs, particularly in western countries. The recent Ranbaxy case is one such example.
- 6) Inadequate institutional setup to eradicate patent ever-greening.
- 7) Growing bilateral and multilateral agreements across the globe. The recently concluded TPP takes high stand on IP regime and 'Rule of Origin' claims on member countries. These are also resounded in the recent Nairobi declaration.
- 7) New trend of Voluntary Lincensing (VL) by Indian companies with western MNCs to bring famous drugs. The recent agreement of Indian drug manufacturing companies with Gilead Sciences to sell its super hit drug Sofosbuvir or Sovaldi for Hepatitis C is one such example. They have placed many seller restrictions like exporting to high income, middle income and high burden countries. This trend, if continues for other drugs, will drastically reduce Indian exports and creates monopolistic tendencies in our domestic market.

Measures:

- 1) India can raise cause of concern about patent ever-greening practices of big MNCs heavily in global negotiations, particularly in that of WTO as these are unfair market practices.

- 2) Sound implementation of 'Compulsory Licensing' clause under TRIPS agreement which empowers developing and underdeveloped countries to grant CLs for essential and life saving drugs.
- 3) Empowering educational institutions to increase links with drug industries and promote R&D.
- 4) Granting incentives and tax benefits to the companies indulged in R&D. However, care must be taken to curb malpractices.
- 5) Encouraging the usage of generic drugs as is envisaged in Jan Aushadi Scheme.
- 6) Coding international standards for drug manufacturing and clearances for continuing reputation.

Liberal norms on essential and life saving drugs are very necessary, especially in the context of developing countries as they poor public health delivery systems, without which we cannot achieve MDGs and SDGs. Further, pharma industry is one of the major export and foreign exchange earning sectors, so, we should take safeguarding measures at the earliest.

Topic: Critical changes to geographical features

1) According to “The First Global Integrated Marine Assessment” carried out under the United Nations , cumulative impacts of human activities have pushed the oceans’ carrying capacity almost to its limit. Discuss the magnitude and how various human activities are affecting oceans. (200 Words)

Oceans are the lifeblood of planet Earth and humankind. They hold 97% of the planet's water and they produce more than half of the oxygen in the atmosphere and absorb the most carbon from it. Preserving its nature is crucial for life sustenance.

In the backdrop of it, certain anthropogenic activities impact the ocean and its features. They are:

1) Ocean acidification: As Oceans act as carbon sinks, increase global gas emissions results in decrease of pH value of the ocean,

which undermines the functioning of marine ecosystems, coral bleaching and so on.

2) Over fishing results in eradication of distinct local species and cascading effect of the marine food web

3) Impacts of aquaculture near the coasts: Water pollution due to waste generated from fish farms and damage to genetic integrity due to interbreeding with escaped fish from farms

4) Port development and turbine construction for RE development produces extensive noise lead to impaired hearing of marine

animals.

5) Dredging leads to species reduction and change to seabed geomorphology

6) Oil spills results to mortality of sea birds and coastal pollution

7) Other human activities like unregulated beach tourism also affects marine ecosystem.

Hence, it is clear that urgent action on a global scale is required to protect world oceans and evolve measures for sustainable use of oceans.

Topic: World Geography

2) Briefly explain the theory of Plate Tectonics and examine why its importance to geology has been compared to that of Newton's laws in physics. (200 Words)

Theory of Plate tectonics

It says that earth crust is made up of 7 major plates which glides over and under resulting in the formation of geological features. The force behind the plate tectonic is the convection in the mantle ie due to convection current hot magma in earth core rises and cold mantle rocks sinks. The type of motion between the plates define the types of boundaries ie whether it is a convergent, divergent or transform boundary. Each boundaries has its own characteristic geological features for example divergent boundaries are characterized by rift in the surface.

Comparison of importance of Plate tectonics theory with Newtons laws

Newtons laws unified many laws that existed during that period for instance keplers laws of planetary motion was only limited to motion of planets. But newtons laws not only explained planetary motion but was applicable to all objects. He proved that Kepler laws were only a special case of newtons laws of motion. This gave a new impetus to modern physics during his period which continues even today.

Similarly before there were many theories which explained the formation of several geological features and among that one such important theory is continental drift theory. It explained the formation of geological features due to the movement of continental plates but failed to explain the nature of force propelling the plates. Alfred

wegener who put forward continental drift theory proved the formation of Himalayas as a result of collision of Indian sub continent plate with Asian plate .But It was plate tectonics theory which unified all theories which were incomplete and restricted to special cases.Hence Importance of plate tectonics theory in geology is often compared with newton laws of modern physics.

Topic: World history; Important events – their forms and effect on the society

1) What do you understand by Fourth Industrial Revolution? Briefly throw light on previous three Industrial Revolutions and discuss what the Fourth one means for India. (200 Words)

The fourth industrial revolution is the term used to refer to the latest stage of maturity in manufacturing and production technology. It usually consists of manufacturing using cyber-physical systems including 3-d printers and computers.

Before the 4th, the industrial revolution can be seen as an evolution into over three stages:

1. first industrial revolution: production using water, steam and coal powered technologies, started in England in 18th century.
2. second industrial revolution: large scale production using electrical energy combined with scientific management of processes including conveyor belts etc.
3. third industrial revolution: production of and using Electronics and IT including large scale robotics.

However the 4th industrial revolution is different because the level of automation and artificial intelligence as reached the next level ensuring that electronics and robotics can create their own subsequent generations for their own use.

Benefits for India:

1. more production, growth and development
2. more automation means more efficient products and processes, faster growth
3. boost for small scale industries as production gets automatic and cheap

Potential losses for India:

1. Loss of jobs to automation
2. Inequity in income distribution as means of production are expensive
3. Increase in opportunity cost due to unskilled workforce

Challenges & Suggestions:

1. A more progressive taxation regime will ensure equity

2. Investment into space sector will be beneficial as 3d printers can build cheap satellites in space itself
3. Asteroid mining can be looked into
4. Skilling india should take a priority

Topic: Modern Indian history from about the middle of the eighteenth century until the present- significant events, personalities, issues ; Communalism;

2) Critically analyse the views of Dr Ambedkar on Hinduism. Do you think there has been an attempt made to own Dr. Ambedkar's legacy by very people whom he despised? Critically comment. (200 Words)

Dr Ambedkar-one of visionaries of India during the period of independence has been criticized for his hatred towards Hinduism. Critics lay their claim on the basis of his conversion of Buddhism, burning Manusmriti in public gathering and on the interpretation of his writings.

However, it would be myopic to regard such a towering figure as the critique of a religion. Ambedkar didn't hate Hinduism but Brahminism. He was not against Hinduism but against the discriminatory practices being followed by the Brahmins in their dealing with the lower castes like Shudras. He expressed how the four castes- Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudras were reorganized in the past days on the basis of performance of deeds but with progress of time, such reorganizations took a backseat and there was a rigidity in the caste structure.

Dr Ambedkar's legacy lies in the fact of being a crusader for Dalits and spearheading attacks on the practice of untouchability. In the recent past, some of the pressure groups that traditionally hated Ambedkar because of their misplaced claim that the latter hated Hinduism have begun to adopt Dalits in the mainstream political process.

However, such process should not be seen in a 'political' light but should be observed as a positive move to empower the Dalit communities by thinning down the lines that have kept them alienated for decades. Bringing Dalits in the political process would ensure their adequate representation and power for the benefit of all sections of the society.

Topic: Salient features of Indian society; Urbanization – problems and remedies

1) In your opinion, what is the role of society, especially of the aspirational class, in fighting problems such as pollution in Indian cities? Do you think citizens are contributing their part in cleaning and fighting pollution in our cities? What administrations can do to actively involve citizens in fighting these problems? Critically discuss. (200 Words)

With most of the Indian cities grappling with problems of population, it is pertinent that grass root people i.e. the society with its aspirational class take part in doing their bit to reduce population. Some of the steps that can be taken by them are:

- Shedding the culture of consumerism i.e. excessive consumption that often leads to generation of wastes
- Adopting the culture of 'reuse, recycle and reduce' in order to contain waste generation
- Opting for public transport, car pooling and cycles (like in Paris) while commuting to their workspaces
- Employing greener sources of energy in buildings where they work

Analysis of the role of citizens in cleaning and fighting pollution in the cities reveals a mixed picture. On one hand, there are people that have accepted the outcomes of living in an unhealthy environment and constantly striving to adopt clean energy sources or a healthy lifestyle that seeks to maintain the equilibrium in the environment.

However, on the other, there are people though aware or unaware are not ready to shed their unhealthy way of living. Such people are under the mistaken belief that when others are not doing their bit in reducing pollution, then why they should adopt such a culture.

In order to bring such people in the "green force" for reducing pollution, administrators can take the following steps:

- Organizing campaigns and programmes in the locality to increase awareness about sources of pollution and their possible impact
- Setting an example by opting for public transport in their commute so that people are inspired to adopt them too
- Promoting schemes such as "Name and Shame" for those causing pollution or those reducing them

The role of administrators is more of persuasive nature and the end steps have to be taken by citizens only to enjoy a healthy life.

Topic: Salient features of Indian society; Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

1) “A lot of social transformation took place during the Gupta period repercussions of which are felt even to this day.” Discuss. (200 Words)

The social transformation that took place during Gupta period included:

1. endogamy (that is marrying within one's caste) started
2. Hardening of caste system and enforcement of social strictures against marriage between castes, as enshrined in the Dharmasastra
3. revival of sanskrit
4. christianity had arrived but confined in the malabar area
5. sacrifice replaced by worship and meditation was somewhat replaced by devotion and bhakti
6. shakti cult emerged, worship of mother goddess started, tantrism became prevalent
7. Subordination of women citing religious scriptural authority started

The effects of these transformation are seen even today in the form of:

1. Genetic history of indian's which shows caste-mixing declined since gGupta period
2. Intra-caste marriage is still the norm within practicing hindus
3. Women still face restrictions and discrimination sanctioned by hindu scriptures
4. Shakti cult/worship of female deities in hinduism continues
5. christianity is still a minority religion
6. strict caste-system still plagues the indian society.

Topic: Resources; Locational factors of industries

1) India, one of the world's leading producer of iron ore has become near zero exporter of the ore in recent years. Examine the reasons and implications of this on iron ore production, consumers and producers. (200 Words)

Consumption of heavy metals and major minerals such as iron ore are seen as a pattern of demand and economic activity existing in the economy. India has huge iron ore resource base, though high quality magnetite ore presence is very low, it is

contributing to our exports since the colonial era. However, for the last two or three years, there is a remarkable decline in India's iron exports.

Reasons:

- 1) India primarily exports raw iron ore and iron pellets to other countries which they use in manufacturing sector. The global, particularly China, economic slow down reduced the demand for iron ore.
- 2) China extracting huge iron ore and reduced export duties highly damaged India's global competitive index in iron ore.
- 3) Advanced technologies and high quality products require high grade iron ore like Magnetite. India has low Magnetite reserves and huge hematite reserves.
- 4) Rise in input costs - delayed cut down of export duties, high domestic taxes on value addition, poor logistics and infrastructural facilities, cross subsidisation scheme of railways etc.
- 5) Closure or shutdown of many mining sites like that of Odisha, Goa etc., by the judiciary due to breach of environmental laws.
- 6) Measure taken by the government to increase production are inadequate and getting clearances is inordinately delayed.

Implications on ore production & producers:

- 1) Lack of global demand discourages existing producers to produce more or for explorations.
- 2) If persists, it may lead to closure of few more mining sites due to consistent losses.
- 3) Market impulse for Magnetite extraction increases.

Implications on consumers:

- 1) Domestic consumers like automobiles, heavy industries etc., would take advantage in the short run with reduced prices.
- 2) Reduction in input cost to these industries increases profits.
- 3) In the long run, supply constraints may occur and gets disadvantage.

In order to make our exports more competitive, government annulled export duties on ore with ferrous content less than 58% (hematite grade). This will stabilise our products in global markets to some extent.

Topic: Urbanization – problems and remedies

1) Recently the union government announced the list of 20 cities that have qualified to build smart infrastructure under Smart City initiative. Examine how these cities will be developed to make them smart. (200 Words)

The government plans to infuse nearly Rs 50000 crore into making the smart cities. The choice of this 20 cities itself is based on feasibility and cost effectiveness, result orientation and citizen participation.

How this is to be implemented

1. Retrofit the area to provide world class infrastructure. For eg: e-governance, smart health and education services, CCTV surveillance, proper management of water, energy, solid waste
2. Redevelopment i.e. replacement of existing built up environment with a new layout. This co-creation uses mixed land use and increased density to enhance the existing infrastructure
3. Greenfield development using innovative planning and providing for affordable housing. Eg GIFT City, Gujarat
4. Pan city development using ICT and solutions, for eg, smart solutions in transport sector to reduce commuting time (Intelligent Traffic management system).

Each of the shortlisted city shall use one or more of the above features. It has to be noted that for inclusive growth, the need is of integrated city planning such that SBA and AMRUT complement each other.

To do so

1. SPV (special purpose vehicle) with CEO - time bound execution of projects in a cost effective manner
2. Rs 200 crore for each city from central government with 100 crore each in next 3 years. This fund will have to be matched by money from state government and municipalities
3. Moreover, to supplement the funds and resources PPP model be used – For eg, Private investments for wifi facilities and beautification of public places using Corporate CSR

Topic: Salient features of Indian society; Social empowerment

2) It is said that there is some quantifiable evidence that caste-based discrimination still exists in India, especially in schools and jobs. Discuss the forms of these discriminations, their impact on the discriminated people and reasons why this still persists in India. (200 Words)

Even decades after independence, despite the provision for equality and ending discrimination, the caste-based discrimination continue to hold strong ground as evident by the following cases:

Schools and Jobs-

- Low grades are assigned by teachers to students belonging to lower castes
- People belonging to lower castes have little chances to be called for an interview

Other spheres-

- Inter-caste marriages between lower caste and upper caste are allowed
- Lower caste are often forced to opt for menial jobs like manual scavenging and sewage
- Lower caste are not allowed to make entitlements for lands and are made to work as landless laborers
- Bonded labor system continues to prevail and is biased towards lower sections

Impact of such discrimination-

- Lower castes don't enjoy a good quality life and it pulls down the overall HDI
- Potential of lower castes remain untapped and human capital is lost
- Psychological impact whereby they adopt their conditions as if they are entitled to it and shun in raising their voice against discrimination
- In extreme cases, discrimination may lead to incidents like suicide by Rohith Vemula

Reasons behind persistence of such discrimination

- Traditional mindset with deep rooted caste system in pockets of India
- Low level of awareness among lower caste about the government policies and legislation intended for their favor

- Poor implementation of existing laws like Prevention of Atrocities Act
- Controversial rulings by SC like upholding the Agama practice in Tamil Nadu that doesn't allow lower caste to reach the position of priest

Organizing media campaigns that directly impinge upon the discriminatory mindset of people to make them modern and civilized in true sense should be the way forward.

Topic: Urbanization – problems and remedies

1) Information technology is taking on an increasingly important role in Indian urban governance, both in high-level policy announcements and localised innovations. Do you think our cities are ready for such “smart” technological improvements? Analyse. (200 Words)

Role of information technology (IT) in Indian urban governance

- Policies - information gathering, mapping, public participation, sharing of best practices
- Localised innovations
- Mobile applications for complaints, their tracking
- Awareness through SMS, Twitter Samwad

With the ‘Smart cities’ programme launched, it can be said that our cities are ready for “smart technological improvements

- Increasing bandwidth with cheaper coverage especially after National e-governance mission
- Necessary infrastructure is being set up with Andhra Pradesh already having HD videoconferencing up to mandal level
- Telephone density in urban areas is 140 per 100 users with >90% mobiles
- Digital literacy has been increasing with states like Telangana making computer education compulsory

But issues still remain

- 24*7 electricity is an issue which is required for continuous internet supply

- Basic issues like waste management remain unaddressed, which makes it anachronistic to aspire for higher services
- Digital divide still remains especially considering the proliferation of slums with rapid urbanisation
- Usage in local language could be a problem
- Greater technology could mean greater emissions which could be a problem considering the climate change, with Indian cities already having one of the highest pollution and emission levels

Steps needed:

- Energy sufficiency complemented by Renewable energy policy
- Technology should be inclusive to provide basic services for all, not higher services for selected few
- Digital literacy should be improved including local languages
- Cyber security constraints have to be addressed